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Life of the Master

A POEM



By S. S. JONES

Provo, Utah, Christmas, 1913

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**THE LIFE OF THE
MASTER**

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THE LIFE OF THE
MASTER

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DEDICATION

I desire to dedicate this, my humble effort, "The Life of the Master," to all who believe in the divine mission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and His infinite atonement.

S. S. JONES.

Provo, Utah, Christmas, 1913.

Life of the Master

A POEM



By S. S. JONES

Provo, Utah, Christmas 1913

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PREFACE

For some time past my mind has been led to contemplate the life and doctrines of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So deeply was my mind impressed that I felt impelled to commit them to manuscript. My failing health and eyesight, during the time employed in writing these verses, seem to have been compensated by a stronger appreciation of the simplicity of the Savior's teachings—their adaptability to the human wants, and the sublime grandeur of His sufferings and death for the redemption of the human family.

Asking the indulgence of my readers in my humble effort,

Sincerely Yours,

In the cause of human redemption,

S. S. JONES.

* * * * *

Vermont Building,

Salt Lake City, Utah, Sept. 26, 1913.

Elder S. S. Jones,

Provo City.

Dear Brother Jones:

I return herewith the typewritten copy of your story in verse entitled, "The Life of the Master." I have read it with much interest and feel that it cannot fail to do good to all who read it; it is the old story beautifully retold. I trust the poem will be read by many.

JAMES E. TALMAGE.

*Statesmen and Warriors, Conquerors and Kings
Have gained high eminence in worldly things;
Yet all their pomp, magnificence and fame
Sink in the shadows before Jesus' name.*

S. S. J.

THE LIFE OF THE MASTER

A Christmas Eve on a Wint'ry night
When the hills and vales are robed in white ;
Our thoughts go back, we bear in mind,
When shepherds on the plain reclined
 Hundreds of years ago.

They heard the Angels chant above
Of a Savior's birth and a Savior's love,
And the grandest theme on that night so still
Was peace on earth and sweet good will
 To mortals here below.

And the wise men came from lands afar,
Led to that spot by the guiding star,
And solemnly their homage paid
To the little child in manger laid.

'Twas Christ our King, Jesus Our Lord,
Whom they in reverence adored :
Then costly presents did unfold
With gifts of frankincense and gold.

The wise men quietly withdrew,
Unheeding Herod's interview,
Nor deign'd to tell the tyrant where
The Christ-child lay in Mother's care.

We all have read and read with pain,
How Herod had the children slain ;
But Joseph took at God's command,
Mother and Child to Egypt's land.

Escaping thus the stern decree,
Oh Herod's horrid infamy.
There did these sacred ones reside
Until the cruel tyrant died.

* * *

A brilliant morning witnessed the return
Of Joseph's family from their long sojourn
In far-off Egypt, over hill and plain,
Back to the land of Palestine again :

Joseph with little he could call his own
Save wife, and Jesus who to youth had grown.
They turned to Nazareth just off the road
And there this sacred family abode.

Oh Nazareth, fair Nazareth, happy thy lot !
For when our Savior, though thou knew it not,
Turned with His parents in thy midst to stay,
It made thee known forever and for aye.

Little is written of His name or fame
Until to John, on Jordan's bank he came.
Save when with doctors and with lawyers, he
Gave proof of wonderful precocity.

Tho' twelve years old, to them 'twas clearly shown
The sacred scriptures were by Him well known.

When after His immersion in the stream
By John the Baptist it was clearly seen
That He was the acknowledged Son of God,
And thence went forth to teach the living word.

While in the wilderness His great temptation came,
But Satan found allurements all in vain ;
"Get thee behind me," was His stern reproof ;
He chose to worship God and spread the truth.

* * *

Now the great mission of His life was on,
In doing good to all and fearing none;
His ministers, way-farers of the sea,
The humble fisher-folk of Galilee.

Among the poor His friends were mostly found,
They gladly listened to the Gospel sound.
'Twas Mary Magdalene, whose love so sweet,
With tears and tresses bathed and dried His feet.

The Priests and Pharisees on Him looked down
While others offered praise, they gave a frown;
Oft to perplex their wiser men essayed,
But His calm dignity was undismayed.
In vain they tried to cross Him in His words
For his replies were sharp as two-edged swords.

His first great miracle occurred when He
Was at the marriage feast in Galilee.
'Twas there He manifested power divine
By turning jars of water into wine.
He healed the sick, gave eyesight to the blind,
Restored to reason those of unsound mind;
The leper cleansed, and caused the deaf to hear,
And raised the widow's son from off the bier:
With love divine, the little children blest,
And promised to the heavy laden, rest.
By supreme power, on two occasions fed
Thousands of souls with a few loaves of bread;—
Happy the scribe who sacred records kept,
And wrote that blessed sentence, "Jesus wept."

When Lazarus, who'd lain four days entombed,
At Christ's command came forth and life resumed;
By faith, weak mortals do not understand,
He walked upon the sea as on dry land;
Said to the roaring billows, "Peace be still,"
And demons fled subservient to His will;

Yet in His bearing, He was meek and mild,
Treating all kindly as a little child.
Save the poor Fig Tree, perchance to show God's power,
At Christ's command it withered in an hour.

How could it be that one so thus empowered
Could bear the scorn and scoffs they on Him showered;
Legions of Angels would attend His call,
But yet He calmly, meekly bore it all.
He knew full well what was required of Him,
He came to make an offering for sin.

* * *

Yet not alone the miracles He wrought,
But greater still the doctrines that He taught;
His code of morals was divinely new
Startling alike to Pagan, Greek and Jew:—
Theirs was the rule of tyranny and force
With rites and ceremonies crude and coarse;
He and His ministers to win men strove
With the persuasive eloquence of love.

The golden maxim, "unto others do,
As you'd have others do like unto you,"
Is known where'er His banner is unfurled
In all the greatest nations of the world:
If others smite thee, smite thou not again;
If they revile, revile not, bear the pain;
And if one would desire to gain God's favor
Then as one loves himself, so love his neighbor.

He'd chide the idler, still He loved the poor
And bade the rich give freely of their store;
Greatest of all His plan to make men free
Through that blest boon, their own free agency.

Indignant at the Temple's desecration
By money changers, plying their vocation,
He drove them forth, commanding them refrain
From making God's own house a place of gain.

* * *

His wondrous love was proven void of doubt
When told His kindred waited Him without ;
"All they who do my Father's will," said He,
"Are mothers, sisters, brothers, unto me."

Ponder ye lofty ones, Bishop, Priest or King,
Study the life of whom, both Saints and seraphs sing ;
How in humility, free from all deceit
Jesus our Lord and God, washed His disciples' feet.

* * *

When stern-faced men with stones in hand held fast
At a defenseless woman's form to cast,
Jesus stood forth, saying in commanding tone :
"Let he that hath not sin cast the first stone."
Then with forgiving words, words which we all adore,
Said to the frail one : "Go and sin no more."
Such acts as these make deep impressions
And serve through life as lasting lessons.

* * *

Within His law no stern decree we find
To force the heart's desire, or subjugate the mind ;
Down through the years His mercy holds out still,
Imparting to us grace and our free will :
Of further teachings Matthew gives account
In the famed sermon spoken on the Mount,—
Tho' persecution raged, 'twas all in vain
Yet thousands of the faithful Saints were slain.

His truths have lasted near two thousand years,
Tho' oft bedew'd with blood and bitter tears;
These principles embodied in His word,
Form the true Gospel of the Son of God;
They stand today above all creeds supreme,
The doctrines of the humble Nazarene.

Warriors and statesmen, conquerors and kings,
Have reached high eminence in worldly things,
Yet all their pomp, magnificence and fame
Sink in the shadows before Jesus's name.

Once treated with contempt and scorn, but now
The greatest majesties before Him bow;
Yes, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess
That Jesus is the Lord, the Man of Holiness!
The honor of the world was not His quest,
Had He desired, He could have been the guest
At feasts and public functions of the great,
Where fawning flatterers would upon Him wait.

One with a mind so lavishly endowed
Could influence the rich and sway the crowd;
For bear in mind, Jerusalem was then
The center of the East for learned men:
The seat of commerce, the great mart of trade,
To which long caravans their journeys made.
It was the terminus of every road
Where merchants did their costly wares unload.
A Roman garrison was quartered there
To guard the Empire's interests with care,
But opulence possessed no charms for Him,
He came to suffer, and atone for sin,
And offer to mankind the one great plan
To formulate the brotherhood of man.

He was the greatest leveler the world will know,
The rich, the poor, all classes, high and low

Could be united under His regime
And dwell contented till the end of time.
He did not seek the favor of the great,
His followers were from those of low estate :
There! see, He comes along the dusty street
Followed by friends and those He chanced to meet ;
The one He healed of palsy, too, is there
Voicing his thanks to God in praise and prayer.

The crowd increases as He comes along,
Peter and James are there among the throng ;
He stops awhile some parable to tell
Holding His listeners bound as by a spell.

No sacred halo o'er His head we see,
Nor in His raiment signs of high degree ;
His features from long fasts are pinched and pale
With lines, such as long suffering entail :
We see a sacred sorrow in His face
Foreshadowing what shortly will take place ;
Yet in His bearing God-like and serene,
Tokens of love are in His movements seen.

His voice is resonant, not sharp nor shrill,
But like the "still small voice" on Sinai's hill,
"Come unto me," He cried, "ye sore oppressed,
Oh come ye heavy laden, I will give ye rest ;
Come with a contrite spirit and a broken heart
And I to you my blessings will impart."

Now see those Pharisees from out the crowd,
They interrupt with questions, bold and loud ;
With dignity He turns on them to gaze
Exhibiting no symptoms of amaze :
Then conscious of the evil in their mind
Rebukes them, as blind leaders of the blind.
Silenced, discomfited with naught to say,

The Pharisees in anger steal away :
Mark now a pathway through the crowd is made,
They bear some sick one, on a litter laid
With fever-stricken brow and trembling hands
And place him near to where the Savior stands ;
The sick one turns his head and cries with all his soul
“Lord if thou wilt, oh thou canst make me whole.”
The Savior thus implored gazes on high,
His lips move as in prayer, He seems to heave a sigh,
And now His God-like nature stands revealed
As He saith, “Cheer thee, Ezra, be thou healed.”
Ezra, o’erjoyed at mention of his name
While a new life goes coursing through his frame,
Stands on his feet and calmly looks around.
All eyes behold him, but there is no sound ;
Then with a grateful smile upon his face,
Takes up his cot and seeks his dwelling place :
Thus Jesus went through Palestina’s host
Preaching alike in cities of the Coast.

* * *

Oh ! solemn night when Jesus was betrayed,
More solemn still the sacrifice He made ;
Can human tongue portray the agony
That He endured within Gethsemane ?
When taken prisoner His friends had flown ;
Truly He trod the wine-press all alone.

Not tears alone but blood evinced His sorrow,
For well He knew the anguish of the morrow ;
Anguish so deep in its intensity
He cried aloud, “Let this cup pass from me,”—
Recalling then the task for which He’d come
Exclaimed, “Let not My will, but Thine O God be
done :”

Alas! poor Judas had best passed away
At birth, than live to Jesus Christ betray.

Tho' Peter failed to own his Lord when pressed,
Yet he dared more in following than the rest;
When the cock crew, his glance caught Jesus' eye,
He then went out and wept most bitterly.

They took Christ to the judgment hall to wait
For Pontius Pilate to pronounce His fate.
There in the early morning, cold and grey,
They in mock majesty the Lord array;
Upon His God-like form, a faded robe they place,
And shame on shame, they spat upon His face:
Heaped on Him insult, taunts and cruel scorn,
On His pale brow, pressed down the piercing thorn:
With brutal hands, they smote Him on the cheek,
Yet like unto one dumb, He did not speak.
The thieves tho' criminals, were not berated,
Then why should He be thus humiliated!—
Oh! how could Heaven withhold its indignation
And not pour vengeance on such desecration?
For Pilate found no fault in this just man.
Then from the enraged Jews the clamor rang
Crucify! Crucify!—to us Barabbas give,
This base blasphemer is not fit to live.
Up to Golotha's Mount (O Saints, hold back your
tears),

They led the Son of God midst shouts and jeers;
O'erburdened with His cross upon the road
Simon the Cyrenean came and bore the load;
And when the summit of the Mount was made,
Upon the ground that fated cross was laid.

They nailed Him down upon its rough hewn beams,
From feet and hands the life blood ran in streams;

Nor did they heed the torture or the strain
That shot through every fibre of His frame.

When they uplifted Him, oh! sickening sound,
As they let fall that cross into the ground!
There they upheld it while with earth and stone
They filled the opening till it stood alone.

Now there behold Him writhing, sighing,
Impaled 'tween heaven and earth, and slowly dying;
His kindly glance met not one friendly eye
Among fierce enemies placed there to die;
His sainted mother was the death watch keeping,
Standing far off, among the sisters weeping;—
Yes there behold, those arms extended wide
His words, "Come unto me," exemplified.

* * *

Oh it is sad to tell, but tell we must,
For as the cruel Roman soldier thurst
His keen and glittering spear into His side,
The blood and water followed like a tide,
Drenching His loin cloth, down His sacred limbs,
It fell to earth, a sacrifice for sins.

Tho' wrack'd with pain, His heart no anger knew,
"Father forgive, they know not what they do;"
Those generous words live on throughout all time
To crown His memory with a love sublime.

Oh what a contrast to the taunts and jibes
Hurl'd by unfeeling Pharisees and Scribes;
Hark! 'bove the din they hear His piercing cry,
"Eli! Eli! Lama, Sabachthani."
His head fell forward and thus Jesus died:
Our Lord, the Son of God was crucified.

Finished the mission unto Him assigned—
The great atonement made for all mankind.

* * *

Soon as the cruel tragedy was o'er,
His faithful friends from thence His body bore
To one named Joseph, good and true, by whom
'Twas placed with loving kindness in the tomb:
And Nicodemus gave with kingly grace
Linen and spices for His burial place.

* * * * *

Oh! woe the day, the day when Jesus died,
All nature's forces seemed as horrified;
The heavens in anger at the foul deed done
With clouds' black draperies obscured the sun,—
The firm earth shook, the Temple's veil was rent,
The elements, as if aware Christ's blood was spent,
Rained tears in torrents, and the thunder's crash
Responded to the lightning's vivid flash.
The multitude in terror fled away
To seek their homes in undisguised dismay;
Jerusalem was filled with fear and fright,
Wailing disturbed the stillness of the night;—
The sobs of women, men's despairing groans,
Were mingled with sweet Mother Mary's moans.

O proud Jerusalem! that fatal hour,
Pronounced thy doom, and robbed thee of thy power;
The Roman armies soon were at thy gate,
Vain were thy cries, repentance came too late.

* * *

Next morning came, but with it no relief
To sooth their sorrows, or assuage their grief;
None of His faithful followers ever thought
That one who such great miracles has wrought

Would ever die, but live this world to own
And build hereon His kingdom and a throne.
These hopes were shattered, heartsick and forlorn,
Nothing seemed left them but to grieve and mourn.
They gathered in small groups, some here, some
there,—
When night's shades fell, their sole relief was prayer.

* * *

But on the third bless'd morn from out the skies
Burst forth bright rays of hope and glad surprise;
The grandest scene in this world's history
Dispell'd the gloom, and solved the mystery
When Christ, our Lord, who came on earth to save,
Wrought His triumphant vict'ry o'er Death, Hell and
Grave.

Prophets and wise men, seers and sages
Had look'd to this event through all the ages;
'Twas now accomplished without one defection,
The glorious triumph of the resurrection.
The word that Christ had risen quickly spread,
Cheering the hearts of those who mourned Him dead;
In haste the brethren went with hurrying feet
To tell the joyful news from street to street.

The weaver let his flying shuttle rest,
Folded his arms in silence 'cross his breast,—
Turned from his loom and gazed upon the floor
While wife and child stood at the inner door:
Then in a voice of wonderment he said;
"You say the Master's risen from the dead!
Did we not see Him nailed to that cross beam and post;
Did we not hear His cry as He gave up the Ghost?
Was He not swath'd in linen, and then laid
Within the tomb and sealed—that Joseph made?

Tell me, O tell, how can such wonders be?
"As it was told to us, so we tell thee."

Those who informed us these events took place,
The truth was register'd upon their face:
'Twas Mary Magdalene at break of dawn,
Who went unto the sepulcher to mourn.
On her approach she saw to her dismay
The stone that closed the tomb was rolled away,
And looking in, her heart with grief was torn
To find the body of her Lord was gone:
Turning, there stood the gardener, she thought,
And pleading piteously of Him besought
To give her aid, for she felt so forsaken,
And tell her where His body had been taken.

The person thus addressed pronounced her name;
She knew the voice, 'twas Jesus still the same:—
His sacred presence banished all her fears,
Filling her heart with love, her eyes with grateful tears.
She would embrace Him, but He bade her go,
Saying, "Tell my brethren, and have them know
That I am risen and you've talked with Me;
I go before them into Galilee."

Mary in haste to Peter took the word
And told him she had seen the risen Lord
When he and John ran straightway to behold,
And found the opened tomb as they'd been told.

* * *

During this time, believers filled the street,—
At Seth, the weaver's, they were wont to meet;
Altho the Savior sought to make it plain
That He'd be put to death, then rise again,
None of His friends or followers, no not one
Believed it till the cruel deed was done.

When it occurred it caused such consternation
Methinks I hear the following conversation:—
“Praise God,” cried Bartimeus, who once was blind.,
“Not only in our sight but in our mind
Have we been lacking; did we not hear Him say
That He would die and rise on the third day?
Johanna raised her thin arms o’er her head,
Her eyes bedimmed with tears, in fervor said:
“Do not the sacred scriptures make it plain
The Lamb of God should die and rise again?”

It seems I hear the Roman guard march down
Bidding them all disperse, with curse and frown;
But some still lingered in the weaver’s room
And there with earnestness the theme resume.

Said Jude, “A rumor is around today,
That His disciples stole His corpse away
While those whom Pilate set safe watch to keep
From toil and over-service fell asleep.”

Then spoke shrewd Titus, “That seems strange to me,
For those same guards are now at liberty;
Soldiers who sleep on watch to them assigned
Meet death, or in some prison are confined.”
“All these are idle tales,” bold Thaddeus said,
“’Tis evident those soldiers have been paid
To falsify; at first they each did own
An Angel came and roll’d aside the stone,
Whose face like lightning, and whose robes so white,
That they betook themselves in haste to flight.”
And thus they spoke with joy, though some still
doubted,
But hope and faith prevailed, and doubt was routed.

* * *

As the bright sun at noon outshines the dawn,
So did the blessed resurrection morn

Brighten the hopes and make faint hearts revive,
As proof increased that Jesus was alive.
Nor did our blessed Savior rise alone,
The graves of many Saints were open thrown,
And 'pearing to their friends, were seen of them
Within the city of Jerusalem;
But let it be within remembrance kept
Christ was the first-fruits of all those who slept.

Word came that as with a friend, Cleopas
Was traveling on the way to Emmaus,
A stranger joined them while upon the road
And conversed freely as they onward strode.

Cleopas and his friend were much downcast,
Reflecting on the sad events just past;
Whereon the stranger in more cheerful vein
Able began the scriptures to explain:
Which saith the Son of God must surely die
Ere He ascended to His throne on high.

His converse with them won conviction
And reconciled them to the crucifixion;
With knowledge and with kindness in turn
The hearts of both did in their bosoms burn;
And as they to the parting place had come,
Entreated Him go with them to their home.
Consenting, and while seated at the board,
Their eyes were open'd and they knew the Lord;
He blessed them, and so great was their delight,
Back to Jerusalem, that very night
They went in haste to tell that He'd arose;
That Jesus lived again, despite His foes.

* * *

As these events were thus narrated,
Proofs of the living Christ accumulated;

The eleven while in a room with closed door,
To keep them safe from Jewish wild uproar,
As they sat pondering the things they'd heard,
The Savior whom they loved, to them appeared;
"Peace be unto you," were the words He spoke,
And on their heads the spirit did invoke:
Saying to doubting Thomas, "Come and see,—
A spirit hath not flesh and bones like me."

His sacred presence made their hearts rejoice
And oh! the joy, to hear again His voice;
To make His own identity complete,
Showed unto them His hands, His side and feet.

Those cruel wounds, the testimony bore
That He was the same Jesus as before;
Thomas, in tears, with penitence drew nigh,
Call'd Him his Lord and God, with sob and sigh.

While all in wonderment and joy combined,
Hailed Him as Christ, the Savior of mankind.

* * *

His sacred voice was heard by them once more
When He partook of fish upon the shore;
And He was seen as Paul doth well define
By full five hundred persons at one time.

But last of all His voice was by them heard
When He commission'd them to preach the word,
Saying: "Go to every nation, bond and free
As my own chosen witnesses to be."

When this, His last command to them was given,
The Son of God ascended into heaven;
As they stood gazing steadfastly o'erhead
Two sacred beings standing near them said:
"This self-same Jesus, whom thou see'st ascend,
Shall in like manner to the earth descend

To greet His Saints, and banish all their fears,
And reign with them in peace a thousand years."

* * * * *

Hail! Hail! all Hail! Honor, glory, power
Be unto Thee, our Lord, our God forever;
Thou who descended 'neath all things on earth
And gave unto mankind a second birth
A change from these frail tenements of clay
To immortality and endless day,
Hast now ascended to the courts above
To reign supreme o'er all, through boundless love.

Legions of angels met Thee on Thy way,
Showing allegiance to Thy sovereign sway;
Shades of the noble just, gone on before,
Joined in the throng to worship and adore.
The portals to that vast assemblage wide
Were open thrown, to bid Thee there abide;
As thy triumphant pageant moved along
The great expanse was resonant with song.
Unnumbered millions greeted Thy return
To see Thee seated near Thy Father's throne,
Whose glorious grandeur with effulgence bright,
Illumed the scene with rays of purest light.

All earthly sufferings are ended now,
A diadem of power adorns Thy brow;
White-robed arch-angels beautifully fair,
As messengers from orbs afar were there;
Cherubic cohorts as they hovered near
Added resplendence with a lustre clear;
Redeemed throngs, extended far and wide,
Beings immortal ranged on either side;
Rank upon rank they rise, tier above tier
The sons of God in majesty appear
As in illimitable space they tower,

Clad in habiliments of priestly power.
Has heavenly splendor e'er been thus displayed
Since the foundations of the earth were laid
When morning stars sang praise without alloy,
And God's descendants shouted loud for joy?

Then when the mighty concourse was arranged,
And the attention of the hosts attained;
Heralds, in vestments brilliant as the sun,
Advanced, proclaiming the great victory won.
Bright seraphs raised a new triumphal strain
While myriads mingled with a glad refrain;
At first, the tones were gentle, sweet and mild,
Depicting Him as once a little child:
Thence on to Man's estate they stronger grew;
An air of grandeur, all the notes ran through;
Soft, tremulous and low, portrayed the scene
When the anointed one with humble mien
Stood in the judgment hall, to hear His fate
Pronounced by those He loved, with rage and hate.

Softer and lower still, the chords inclined
As the great sacrifice was brought to mind;
Thoughts of His agony stilled every sound;
Then, for a time, deep silence reigned profound.

Again the Heavenly Choir burst forth anew,
Louder through space the glad vibrations flew,
As they re-echoed with intensity
Throughout the realms of God's immensity;
Reverberating thence to many a sphere
While distant worlds the waves of gladness hear
Till all the Universe with rapture rings,
Hailing Him Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

“Glory to God in the highest
Praise Him ye Heavenly host,
Glory to God the Father
The Son and the Holy Ghost.”

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